

Message Text

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 307 - MAY 2, 1977

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ISRAEL. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTED THAT LABOR DISPUTES WITH COMPUTER TECHNICIANS IN ISRAEL'S TREASURY DEPARTMENT HAVE DELAYED THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE KNESSET LISTS OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES, WHICH MUST BE DONE BY MAY 2. IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT PRINTERS HAVE SAID THEY CANNOT PRINT ENOUGH ELECTION BALLOTS UNLESS ADDITIONAL SHIFT WORK IS AUTHORIZED. IF THESE PROBLEMS ARE NOT RESOLVED, THE EMBASSY SAID THAT THE ELECTIONS MAY HAVE TO BE DELAYED, ALTHOUGH THIS IS STILL CONSIDERED UNLIKELY.

2. SPEAKING AT THE SUNDAY SESSION OF ISRAEL'S CABINET, PERES STATED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF ACHIEVING AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT SHOULD NOT BE THE ONLY GOAL OF
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ISRAEL'S MIDEAST POLICY. IN PERES' VIEW, STICKING TO A POLICY OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT COULD CAUSE THE

SITUATION TO DETERIORATE AND CAUSE FRICTION WITH "ISRAEL'S FRIENDS." HE NOTED THAT, IN THE RECENT PAST, ISRAEL HAS FAVORED A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH. REGARDING THE US, PERES STATED THAT HE SAW NO EROSION IN THE US POSITIONS ON KEY PEACE ISSUES, SUCH AS PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA AND THE DEFINITION OF PEACE.

3. THE IDF'S CHIEF OF STAFF, MORDECHAI GUR, HAS TAKEN THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF RESPONDING PUBLICLY TO THE REPORT OF ISRAEL'S STATE COMPTROLLER, WHICH STRONGLY CRITICIZED ISRAEL'S MILITARY READINESS AND OPERATIONS. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY TEL AVIV, GUR ADMITTED THAT THE IDF HAD SHORTCOMINGS BUT SAID THAT THE REPORT'S WORDING AND I,TERPRETATIONS HAS "MISLED THE PUBLIC." EMBASSY TEL AVIV NOTED THAT MANY OBSERVERS CONSIDERED THE TIMING AS WELL AS THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT TO BE POLITICAL, SINCE THE COMPTROLLER IS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY.

4. A SENIOR POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL, CURRENTLY VISITING ISRAEL, HAS TOLD EMBASSY TEL AVIV SOURCES THAT MOST EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING POLAND, ARE INTERESTED IN REESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. THE OFFICIAL SAID THIS WOULD LIKELY HAPPEN ONLY AFTER THE USSR TOOK THE LEAD, BUT HE BELIEVES THIS MAY OCCUR BEFORE THE END OF 1977. (CONFIDENTIAL)

5. EGYPT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLISHED THE TEXT OF THE SOVIET NOTE TO EGYPT PROTESTING THE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD LIBYA. AT THE SAME TIME, THE EGYPTIANS STRONGLY DENOUNCED THE SOVIET MESSAGE, CHARGING IN STRIDENT TERMS THAT IT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO "PROVOKE OTHER
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ARAB COUNTRIES AGAINST EGYPT" AND TURN LIBYA INTO A SOVIET BASE. CAIRO MENA SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR "THIS SERIOUS STEP." THE EGYPTIAN PRESS ALSO LEVELED COUNTER-CHARGES AT THE SOVIETS, SAYING THAT THE SOVIETS WERE USING LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA TO "CREATE TENSION" ON THE EGYPTIAN AND SUDANESE BORDERS.

6. THE EGYPTIAN CHARGE IN TRIPOLI REPORTED ON SATRDAY THAT LIBYAN PRESIDENT QADHAFI HAD CANCELED ORDERS FOR A LARGE-SCALE EXPULSION OF EGYPTIANS LIVING IN LIBYA. THE CHARGE--WHO MAY NOT HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO LIBYAN OFFICIALS--CLAIMED THAT THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT HAD

BEEN PREPARING TO CARRY OUT A MASS EXPULSION OF EGYPTIANS, BUT THAT QADHAFI HAD PERSONALLY ORDERED A HALT AFTER REALIZING THAT A LARGE-SCALE EXPULSION WOULD CRIPPLE ESSENTIAL LIBYAN GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS. MANY EGYPTIANS APPARENTLY NOW WANT TO LEAVE, BUT ACCORDING TO THE CHARGE THEY ARE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN EXIT VISAS FROM THE LIBYANS. THE LIBYANS ALSO HAVE TRIED TO PUT PRESSURE ON CAIRO BY REQUESTING AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE ARAB LEAGUE TO DISCUSS THE POOR STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

7. LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER UBAYDI TOLD A RELIABLE SOURCE LATE LAST WEEK THAT PRESIDENT QADHAFI HAD BECOME "OBSESSED" WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT EGYPTIANS IN LIBYA WERE WORKING AGAINST HIM AND WAS PUTTING UBAYDI UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO PREPARE FOR THE EXPULSION OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. UBAYDI SAID LIBYA WOULD SEEK REPLACEMENTS FOR THE EGYPTIANS FROM TURKEY, YUGOSLAVIA, AND POLAND, BUT HE DOUBTED THAT THESE OR OTHER COUNTRIES COULD PROVIDE THE NUMBER AND KINDS OF WORKERS QUICKLY ENOUGH TO AVOID MAJOR DISRUPTIONS IN LIBYA'S ECONOMY.

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8. QADHAFI HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN USING THE THREAT OF EXPELLING EGYPTIAN WORKERS AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL WEAPON IN HIS DISPUTE WITH CAIRO, AND THE LATEST ACTION COULD STILL TURN OUT TO BE NO MORE THAN A STEP-UP IN WHAT HAS BECOME A WAR OF NERVES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN ANY CASE, QADHAFI MAY BE FORCED TO RETHINK HOW FAR AND HOW FAST TO MOVE IN EXPELLING EGYPTIANS ONCE THE LOSS OF THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISMISSED IS FELT.

9. EGYPTIANS CONSTITUTE OVER 25 PERCENT OF THE LIBYAN LABOR FORCE, PROVIDING MOST OF THE COUNTRY'S ENGINEERS, DOCTORS, TEACHERS, AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, AND MANY OF ITS CIVIL SERVANTS. A SUDDEN INFLUX OF MANY WORKERS WOULD CAUSE AT LEAST TEMPORARY DIFFICULTIES FOR THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. THERE IS ALREADY SERIOUS SURPLUS OF WHITE COLLAR WORKERS AND PROFESSIONALS IN EGYPT, WHO ARE A PRIMARY SOURCE OF ECONOMIC DISCONTENT.

10. SOME OF THOSE NOW EMPLOYED IN LIBYA--PARTICULARLY CONSTRUCTION WORKERS--HAVE SKILLS THAT ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY BOTH IN EGYPT AND ELSEWHERE IN THE ARAB WORLD. THESE DEPORTEES COULD BE RELOCATED IN THE SUEZ CANAL ZONE WHERE WAGES ARE RELATIVELY HIGH AND NEW HOUSING IS AVAILABLE, OR THEY COULD BE "RE-EXPORTED" TO ANOTHER ARAB OIL-RICH COUNTRY WITH AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

11. THE EGYPTIAN WEEKLY "ROSE AL-YUSUF" SAYS IN ITS EDITION TO BE PUBLISHED TODAY THAT CAIRO AND DAMASCUS WILL ANNOUNCE TODAY THE TERMINATION OF THEIR STRAINED CONFEDERATION WITH LIBYA. THE MAGAZINE SAYS THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL ALSO PROCLAIM AN "IMPORTANT POLITICAL STEP" AGREED UPON BY EGYPT, SYRIA AND THE SUDAN, WHICH IT EXPECTS TO BE A NEW CONFEDERATION LINKING THOSE THREE COUNTRIES. IT SAYS DETAILS OF THE NEW ARRANGE-

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MENT WILL BE WORKED OUT AT A MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE THREE STATES FOR WHICH PREPARATIONS ARE UNDERWAY. NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF THE REPORT IS AVAILABLE, BUT PRESIDENT SADAT IS WIDELY EXPECTED TO MAKE A MAJOR PUBLIC ADDRESS TODAY. (SECRET/NOFORN)

12. LEBANON. THE CONTINUED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HIGHLIGHTS THE INABILITY OF ANY OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO RESOLVE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES. EVEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS BY SARKIS, THE SYRIANS, AND THE PALESTINIANS WILL NOT BE ENOUGH. THESE ACCORDS, WHICH ALLOW THE PALESTINIANS FREEDOM OF OPERATION IN THE SOUTH, TO A LARGE EXTENT IGNORE THE CONCERNS OF THE SOUTHERN LEBANESE AND THUS INCREASE THEIR ALIENATION FROM THE BEIRUT GOVERNMENT.

13. MOREOVER, THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE HAS LED MANY SOUTHERNERS TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE VICTIMS OF FOREIGN OCCUPATION. FURTHER, THE GOVERNMENT IN BEIRUT WAS DEAF IN THE PAST TO THE PLEAS OF THE SOUTH LEBANESE FOR PROTECTION FROM ISRAELI RAIDS AND PALESTINIAN HARASSMENT. FINALLY, THE PALESTINIAN ATTEMPTS TO RADICALIZE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH CREATED STRAINED RELATIONS WITH THE GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE VILLAGERS.

14. DURING 18 MONTHS OF CIVIL WAR, MOST PALESTINIANS WITHDREW FROM THE SOUTH IN ORDER TO FIGHT ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON. ISRAELI RAIDS CEASED, AND ARROGANT PALESTINIANS WERE NO LONGER PRESENT. ONCE THE FIGHTING IN BEIRUT WOUND DOWN, THE PALESTINIANS FILTERED BACK AFTER THE WAR. MANY SOUTHERNERS, FOR THEIR PART, DID NOT WANT TO FALL UNDER PALESTINIAN DOMINATION AND SECURED ISRAELI ASSISTANCE IN RESISTING IT. THESE SOUTHERNERS DO NOT TRUST THE SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS, OR THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT. THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION WHICH SEEMS TO SACRIFICE THEIR
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INTERESTS FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF LEBANON OR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

15. PRESIDENT SARKIS RECEIVED ARAFAT ON FRIDAY TO DISCUSS AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH REPORTS OF CONFLICT ON THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING, THE TWO MEN APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES. THE TWO APPARENTLY DID AGREE TO ESTABLISH A NEW PALESTINIAN CAMP SOUTH OF SIDON. SOME 900 TENTS WERE REPORTEDLY ALREADY IN PLACE. THE PALESTINIANS ARE TO EVACUATE THE FORMER CHRISTIAN TOWN OF DAMOUR, WHICH IS ON THE COAST BETWEEN SIDON AND BEIRUT. MANY

OF THE PALESTINIANS WHO WILL MOVE THE NEW CAMPS ARE FORMER OCCUPANTS OF THE EAST BEIRUT CAMPS WHICH WERE OVERRUN BY THE CHRISTIANS LAST YEAR.

16. IF THIS AGREEMENT HOLDS UP, THE PALESTINIANS WOULD APPEAR TO BE GIVING UP THEIR CLAIM TO RETURN TO THE EAST BEIRUT CAMPS. THEIR ACTION PROBABLY REFLECTS A REALIZATION THAT FEW OF THE PALESTINIANS WOULD WANT TO RETURN TO ANY AREA SO DOMINATED BY THE CHRISTIANS. DAMOUR HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF PALESTINIAN DISREGARD FOR LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY. DAMOUR, A CHRISTIAN TOWN OF 25,000, WAS SACKED BY THE PALESTINIANS, AND SHAMOUN PERSONALLY SUPERVISED THE SEA EVACUATION OF ITS INHABITANTS. THE ONE SERIOUS PROBLEM WITH THIS SOLUTION IS THAT ONCE AGAIN SOUTHERN LEBANESE ARE BEING ASKED TO RECEIVE UNWANTED PALESTINIANS FOR THE BENEFIT OF BEIRUT.

17. SARKIS AND ARAFAT APPEAR TO HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS. SARKIS REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING THE REMOVING OF HEAVY WEAPONS FROM THE CAMPS AND THE LIMITING OF ARMED PALESTINIANS TO SEVEN PER THOUSAND PALESTINIANS. (THIS WOULD MEAN A REDUCTION OF SECRET

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THE NUMBER OF ARMED PALESTINIANS IN BEIRUT FROM ABOUT 10,000 TO 700.) THE PALESTINIANS CONTEND THAT SUCH A REDUCTION WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM PROTECTING THEMSELVES. SARKIS REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THE SYRIAN-DOMINATED ARAB SECURITY FORCE IS CAPABLE OF PROTECTING ALL WHO LIVE IN LEBANON.

18. THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT LEADERS APPEAR TO BE BECOMING DEPRESSED OVER THEIR INABILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACCORD AND TO GET ON WITH THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON. THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN AN UNUSUALLY STRONG POSITION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD. IT APPARENTLY HAS DONE SO IN THE BELIEF THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD BE WILLING AND ABLE TO IMPLEMENT IT UNILATERALLY IF NECESSARY. LEBANESE LEADERS ARE APPARENTLY COMING TO THE CONCLUSION NOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE NEITHER THE DIPLOMATIC NOR THE MILITARY ABILITY TO DO SO. THIS IS EXTREMELY DISTURBING TO THE LEBANESE. (SECRET)
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